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SUBJECT: Fanmi Lavalas Excluded from Elections, but Given Another Chance

REF: PORT-AU-PRINCE 972

¶1. (SUB) Summary. Early 25 November the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) withdrew its earlier, provisional, authorization for former President Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas to register candidates for February's parliamentary elections, due to inconsistent and insufficient documentation. At the international community's behest, the CEP agreed to give Lavalas an extension until 30 November to provide the required documentation. End summary.

¶2. (U) At the end of the political party registration period that ended November 24, 69 political parties registered with the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to participate in the parliamentary elections. On November 25, the CEP announced that 40 of the registrations were accepted. Most notable and surprising among the rejected registrations was Fanmi Lavalas (FL), which the CEP had provisionally accepted last week after receiving two letters (one PDF copy and one original hard copy) from former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide that designated Dr. Maryse Narcisse as the official FL representative (reftel). The CEP rejected the letters and the FL registration because of differences between the two copies and because Aristide's signature lacked proper authentication (i.e., it was not signed before a notary or consular officer in South Africa).

¶3. (SBU) On November 25, Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive held a meeting with the Ambassadors/Charge's from the U.S., Canada, Spain, France, European Community (EC) and Brazil, along with the leaders of the UNDP and MINUSTAH, to discuss elections funding. Also present were the president and the director general of the CEP. The meeting agenda soon moved from the budget to the subject of FL. In an energetic discussion, the ambassadors from the EC, Canada, Spain and U.S. challenged the wisdom of the CEP's decision and argued for inclusion of FL suggesting that 1) FL's exclusion made it more difficult to convince their respective capitols that Haiti's electoral process is transparent and deserves financial support and 2) FL's perceived strength rests largely on its exclusion from the electoral process. While the CEP leadership was predictably defensive in response, Bellerive was surprisingly supportive. In the end, the CEP president agreed to allow FL to submit another letter, properly authenticated, no later than the deadline for the registration of individual candidates, which is Monday, November 30. (Comment: This extended deadline for FL is a two-edged sword. The decision provides FL with another chance for inclusion. However, if candidates register under the FL banner and the CEP rejects a new Aristide letter on technical grounds or the letter does not arrive, they will not have the opportunity to register as independent candidates. End comment.)

¶4. (SBU) MINUSTAH agreed to quickly communicate the CEP's decision to Narcisse, with whom it has been in frequent contact. Also of note, this afternoon a Haiti radio station broadcast a statement from Aristide, who complained about FL's exclusion from the elections. Post will advise as events continue to develop.  
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